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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: POST'S FOLLOW UP TO THE CAIRO SPEECH AND  
RELATED ACTIVITIES

REF: A. STATE 71325

[B](#). ABUJA 1296

[C](#). ABUJA 1271

[D](#). ABUJA 1270

[E](#). ABUJA 1010

[1](#). Summary: Following President Obama's June 4 speech in Cairo, Mission Nigeria has engaged audiences throughout Nigeria with various outreach activities, including meetings with journalists, government officials, civil society organizations, and traditional religious leaders. Post has also compiled and distributed commemorative transcripts in folders which include video of the Cairo speech; sent SMS broadcast messaging on themes from the speech, held discussions with Islamic leaders and other community stakeholders, and Ambassador gave a speech in Nigeria's conservative Northeast on themes from the Cairo speech and held a roundtable with conservative Islamic leaders. In addition to these recent events, the Mission has ongoing development initiatives and public diplomacy programs that support Muslim outreach. In order to bolster these existing projects, Post recommends increased language training for personnel, translation of speeches and important documents into local languages, continued training and exchange programs, and continued dialogue with the GON and Nigerian civil society. End Summary.

CONTINUED DIALOGUE AFTER THE SPEECH

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[2](#). Beginning on June 4, Mission Nigeria engaged audiences throughout Nigeria employing the following tools and undertaking the following activities:

-- Prior to June 4, Post sent SMS broadcasts to 1,400 of the U.S. Mission to Nigeria's Information Resource Center contacts providing them with the date and time of the speech and encouraging them to watch the speech.

-- On June 4, Ambassador hosted Muslim and Christian religious leaders, as well as members of the press, for a viewing of President Obama's speech followed by a roundtable discussion (ref E). Ambassador then posted a message about the discussion and the speech on her blog.

-- Following the speech, Mission Nigeria's Public Affairs Section (PAS), in collaboration with Post's Mass Information Support Team (MIST), compiled and distributed folders which

include the commemorative transcript of the speech, a brochure about President Obama, and prepared a DVD with video and text of the speech to our contacts including distributing them in the north. The Mission's commemorative folders and DVDs are being used as a best practice in AFRICOM and AF/PDPA .

-- On June 10, PAS hosted 18 Nigerian journalists and academics at an Africa Regional Services Paris organized Digital Video Conference on President Obama's Early Initiatives, including the speech in Cairo (septel).

-- On June 29-30, Ambassador discussed the Cairo speech with government officials and traditional religious leaders in Nigeria's conservative Northeast geopolitical zone, including the Governor of Borno, Governor of Yobe, and the Deputy Governor of Gombe, the Shehu of Borno and the Emir of Gombe (ref C and D).

-- On July 1, Ambassador held a roundtable discussion with 15 prominent Imams, Sheikhs, and Islamic scholars in Maiduguri, Borno State on the messages from the Cairo speech. Copies of the aforementioned commemorative folder were distributed to each participant (ref D).

-- On July 1, Mission distributed commemorative folders to the Vice Chancellor and faculty at the University of Maiduguri and left additional copies and other resources in the American Corner located in the University's library (ref D).

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-- On July 1, Ambassador delivered a policy speech entitled, "A New Beginning - Reaffirming America's Partnership with Nigeria" to government officials, religious and traditional leaders, university students and faculty, youth, community and business leaders, and journalists. The speech linked themes from the POTUS Cairo speech to issues of concern to Muslims in northern Nigeria. More than 50 commemorative folders were also distributed at the venue (ref D).

-- On July 6, Ambassador held another roundtable with democracy and human rights groups in Ekiti State, where they discussed themes from the POTUS Cairo and Accra speeches, such as the importance of governments who take care of their people and promote transparency in holding free and fair elections (ref D).

-- Mission linked a Hausa translation of the Cairo speech to its web-site.

#### OUTCOMES FROM THE CAIRO SPEECH

13. Overall, Nigeria's Muslim community has been very receptive to the opportunities to dialogue with the U.S. Mission to Nigeria on these issues. In order to include the wider non-English speaking northern Nigerian population as part of the outreach audience, Post recommends that the President's Cairo speech and other future relevant documents be translated into local languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, and Kanuri.

14. The commemorative folders are in great demand, but between the video and the written speech, the text is in higher demand. One of our partner media outlets also translated the speech into Hausa, which we have linked to the Mission's web-site. The folders are an excellent example of partnership between the Department of State and the Department of Defense. Based on the success of the folders in Nigeria, AFRICOM has agreed to fund the production and distribution of up to 35,000 additional folders throughout Africa based on Mission Nigeria's model.

U.S. MISSION INITIATIVES THAT  
SUPPORT MUSLIM OUTREACH

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¶5. USAID has a number of ongoing initiatives which support the Mission's efforts to engage Muslim communities. USAID provides support to the Interfaith Mediation Center (IMC) and three Conflict Mitigation and Management Regional Councils (CMMRCs), made up of 37 Muslim and 30 Christian clerics in Kano, Kaduna, and Plateau states. USAID is also training the CMMRCs to collect and disseminate early warning information to relevant agencies and to respond directly and quickly to threats to peace and ethnic religious tensions.

¶6. USAID works with a broad range of institutions and groups including public primary schools in northern Nigeria, which teach the core Quranic curriculum as well as math, English, and social science. In late 2009, USAID will initiate several new education projects, including a Northern Education Initiative that will address policy development and implementation, strengthen information management and use of data for decision-making, human resource development, performance management and accountability, and demand-side capacity development. The inclusion of Islamiyyah schools constitutes an essential element of Muslim outreach. Over the four-year life of the program 600,000 students, 24,000 teachers and 1,000 administrators will receive benefits from these USG interventions. Interventions will address systems that support both public and Islamiyyah primary schools, as well as provide learning centers for the provision of non-formal education to Almajari boys. Additional resources beyond those currently anticipated by USAID would permit the expansion of this program to additional northern states.

¶7. The new teacher training initiative will have a special focus on increasing the enrollment of females in teacher training programs, especially in the north where female teachers are in the minority, to facilitate efforts to

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increase girl-child enrollment and retention. USAID will also provide training and technical assistance to IMC to enhance its capacity to develop and implement interfaith activities, conduct outreach, and ensure sustainability. The project will include implementation of the new National Teacher Education Policy (approved in January 2009 and developed with USAID assistance), review the curriculum in primary and pre-school education, and introduce reading and child centered pedagogy courses. It is also expected to increase the enrollment of women in Primary education Studies and Early Child Development teacher training programs, focused on selected northern states.

¶8. USAID and Sesame Workshop have been implementing a pilot to bring "Sesame Street," the critically-acclaimed children's program to Nigeria. The goal is to mobilize Nigeria's major mass media outlets, including television, radio, print media, and Internet to provide consistent and daily access to education programming to young children. Significant early support was provided through PEPFAR funding. The Mission's initial agreement length of program was from February 25, 2008 through April 25, 2009, but the agreement has just been extended for another five years. Additional resources would allow for the development of an inter-faith conflict prevention and mitigation model that would support the expansion of Muslim outreach.

¶9. The Mission's USAID, PEPFAR, and CDC offices have worked closely with the GON and Nigerian Islamic leaders and scholars to develop an Islamic policy on HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment. The policy development and distribution includes efforts to address HIV/AIDS stigma issues within the Nigerian Ummah.

¶10. The Mission supported several significant outreach efforts, under the leadership of the Sultan of Sokoto and the Emir of Kano to improve awareness and advocacy efforts on polio eradication among traditional leaders and Islamic clerics in northern states. In coordination with Nigeria's

National Primary Health Care Development Agency, USAID held several conferences and workshops were supported to directly address misinformation and secure active support in favor of the immunization campaigns. USAID also contributed to the expansion of the Voice of America Hausa Service, which has boosted listenership in the northern Muslim states and bordering countries with key maternal child health, family planning and reproductive health messages. The Hausa Service has supported several town hall meetings, inviting community leaders, women's group leaders, clergy and traditional leaders to participate in open debates about key issues affecting the northern Muslim communities. Each of these meetings has drawn crowds of standing room only and has been taped for re-broadcast. These initiatives will continue in 2009; additional resources would allow for widened scope and increased outreach.

¶11. The Department of Defense Mass Information Support Team (MIST) and Civil- Military Support Element (CMSE) assist northern Nigerian communities with development projects, such as constructing bore holes, restoring classrooms, and distributing supplies to Muslim schools and clinics.

#### PUBLIC DIPLOMACY PROGRAMS SUPPORTING MUSLIM OUTREACH

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¶12. PAS routinely includes Muslim community leaders, youth, business leaders, and religious clerics in its programs. In July 2009, the CPAO, Public Affairs personnel, PolOff, and Econ Intern attended the Speech and Prize Giving Day of new Horizons College in Minna, Niger State - one of four schools established by the Islamic Education Trust to provide Muslim children with balanced education rooted in Islamic Studies. In June, the Mission donated books to Sunrise International School (another Islamic Education Trust School) after the school completed a reading program encouraging young children to read. The CPAO will also attend the school's Speech and Prize Giving Day in Abuja.

¶13. The Ambassador has met with, visited, and had a dialogue

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with all of the senior Emirs and traditional leaders in the North (including the Sultan of Sokoto), except the new Emir of Katsina who was not available during her two trips to the state.

¶14. In May, the DCM attended a symposium on Nigeria's Arabic and Ajami manuscript resources. The Mission supports the preservation of Nigeria's Islamic manuscripts as part of its commitment to investing in people, in this case by preserving part of Nigeria's unique culture and history. Facilitation efforts of the U.S. Mission to Nigerian in collaboration with Arewa House have encouraged private partners to contributed through training, equipment, and grants.

¶15. PAS has held several roundtable discussions throughout northern Nigeria, as well as in Abuja, Lagos, and Port Harcourt, which centered around American values including diversity, tolerance, non-violent change, and peace.

¶16. The Mission hosts annual outreach events throughout Nigeria during Ramadan, including Iftar dinners.

¶17. Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program was initially worrisome to a number of Islamic clerics who were weary of what they perceived to be another attempt by the West to indoctrinate Islamic youth. However, after a group of concerned Nigerian citizens paid a visit to the U.S. in an attempt to better understand the program, widespread support and acknowledgment of benefits from the program has grown. Participants are now included from 5 northern states. The Mission has designed and distributed a YES program brochure which is widely distributed to interested students. In July, the Embassy hosted thirty high school students and one teacher selected for this year's exchange for a pre-departure program where the country director said increased commitment

to community service and religious tolerance are among the benefits participants obtain.

¶18. In June, PolOff and PolAsst attend the first Islamic Summit hosted in Kano (ref A). PolOff gave a message of appreciation for the opportunity to demonstrate USG desire to listen and learn, partnering with Islamic institutions in promoting common understanding.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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¶19. The Mission recommends that additional staff receive training in appropriate local language skills. Post also recommends that the USG increase support for the Voice of America Hausa Service in order to increase their capacity to report fair and balanced views on communal conflict and human rights issues.

¶20. Post advocates for the continued USG sponsorship of exchange programs for religious leaders, civil society activists, and government officials, on the topics of religious freedom, tolerance, and human rights. Post also advocates for the continued USG support and funding of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative.

¶21. Post recommends that the USG expand support for communal conflict prevention and mitigation through increased funding, training and assistance to the Nigerian federal police force and Nigerian military, especially in regards to non-lethal responses to crowd control, response to sectarian violence and increased investigative and conflict prevention capacities.

¶22. The U.S. Mission to Nigeria will continue to urge the GON to ensure that Shari'a codes uphold the principle of equality under the law, do not apply Shari'a criminal codes to non-Muslims or individual Muslims who do not wish to go before Shari'a courts, and to ensure that practice of Shari'a law does not result in the violation of human rights. In addition, we will urge the GON to cease official support for the Hisbah (religious police) and entrusting professional law enforcement agencies with defined jurisdiction to enforce the law.

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¶23. The Mission will continue to work with existing Nigerian social institutions including civil society and non-governmental organizations, and religious bodies - especially those which address conflict prevention and mitigation, promote peace, are committed to inter-religious and inter-ethnic reconciliation, emphasize capacity-building at the local level, and assist human rights defenders. We recommend the USG support the expansion of the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council to promote dialogue between Christians and Muslims, and replicate the council at state and local levels.

¶24. This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.  
SANDERS